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Lakeside Station Moves Closer To OK

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CHANGES IN CODE ON COMMISSION AGENDA

PLANT CITY - City commissioners are getting closer to removing obstacles in city codes that have prevented approval of a 2,600-home development proposed on industrially zoned property near Coronet Industries.

The change in regulations would allow large scale residential developers to build homes closer together, as long as they preserve a certain amount of open usable space within the subdivision.

Presently, city codes require homes be at least 10 feet apart on each side. The changes would allow homes to be built with 5-foot and 7.5-foot setbacks in portions of the subdivision.

Developments receiving this flexibility would have to be 500 acres or larger, said City



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Manager David Sollenberger.

City leaders will discuss this and other accommodations that would make way for Lakeside Station - a project proposed by Sunrise Homes.

Sunrise plans to incorporate residential, shopping and commercial development on about 1,300 acres near Coronet Industries.

City commissioners also will decide Monday whether to allow a zoning change on the land, now designated for industrial use only. Sunrise Homes has vowed to preserve open space within the development. The space could be used for parks, picnic areas, or other active recreation, Sollenberger said.

Phosphate processor Coronet Industries has a history of environmental violations on record with the county's Environmental Protection Agency and is under order from the agency to resolve ongoing problems at the plant.

Environmental assessments of the land, some of which the city once used to burn garbage, generated initial concerns by Mayor Bill Dodson over air and water quality at the site near Park Road and U.S. 92. But assurance from the EPC that the land is safe to build on has allayed those concerns, Dodson said.

"The only people who might run into problems out there might be those who have asthma or something like that," Sollenberger said.

State health department officials are investigating complaints of a cancer cluster in the area, which some residents believe may result from industrial pollution in the area.

"A lot of people living out there [in the area near Coronet] either have died from or are living with cancer," said Beth Copeland, an investigator with the state health department.

Once her investigation is complete, Copeland will forward the findings to federal health and environmental officials, who will determine whether there is statistical significance to warrant further investigation.

Sollenberger said he hasn't been made aware of the state's investigation and isn't sure whether any other city officials have either.

Dust from the Coronet plant, which processes **phosphate** for fertilizer, has been the main complaint on record from residents in the area.

But samples of pond water and soil indicate a presence of arsenic and other metals.

Coughenour, in a memo sent to city officials in April, said some of the ponds on site warrant further testing.

But city officials said those concerns were allayed by county environmental officials who told them the land is safe for development.

The development would be on city water so the contaminants would not directly affect residents, city officials said.

Lakes in the area are probably not safe for recreational use, said Frank Coughenour, the city's utilities director.

The commissioners will discuss the issues at a workshop at 3:30 p.m. Monday. The regularly scheduled commission meeting is at 7:30 p.m.

